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B-1B team keeps communication lines open

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Oklahoma City Air Logistics Center Public Affairs

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. (AFMCNS) -- Tinker's B-1B Radio Fix Team recently gave the B-1B Lancer's communication system its first full analysis since it was developed in the mid 80s and earned an Air Force award for their efforts.

The team received the Air Force Program Executive Officer for Fighters and Bombers Portfolio Team of the Year award for 2000.

Shortly after the latest B-1B modification was released to the field in the fall of 1998, there were reports of communication anomalies related to air-to-air, air-to-ground and satellite communications, according to Suresh Chandra, B-1B system support management division avionics and software engineering section chief.

"The radio fix team members performed a full field analysis of the aircraft's communications suite from microphones to antennas to headsets and discovered several significant system flaws," Chandra said.

"The team developed proposed system fixes and a method to test and verify their effectiveness," he continued. "When all the corrective actions were defined, they developed a plan to address the entire fleet with a series of staged modifications."

Their effort began in January 1999 with a correct configuration base line and was kit-proofed in September 2000. By November 2001, the last of 93 aircraft will be modified with the team's corrective modifications.

"The team's dedicated efforts in the effective resolution of anomalies affecting the aircrew's communication with air traffic control, close formation air-to-air communication and command and control platforms was outstanding," said Col. Fred Gebhart, B-1B system support management division chief.

The colonel said this was a major undertaking requiring an extensive engineering analysis of the B-1B communications system encompassing more than 36 line repair units.

"This, coupled with the effective logistics planning and field-team support, resulted in effectively and timely resolving these communications system issues to ensure operational mission capabilities of the B-1B weapons system."

Tinker's team consisted of Lori Brown, Phil DeLage, Mike Parish, Greg Van Swearingen and Chandra.

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